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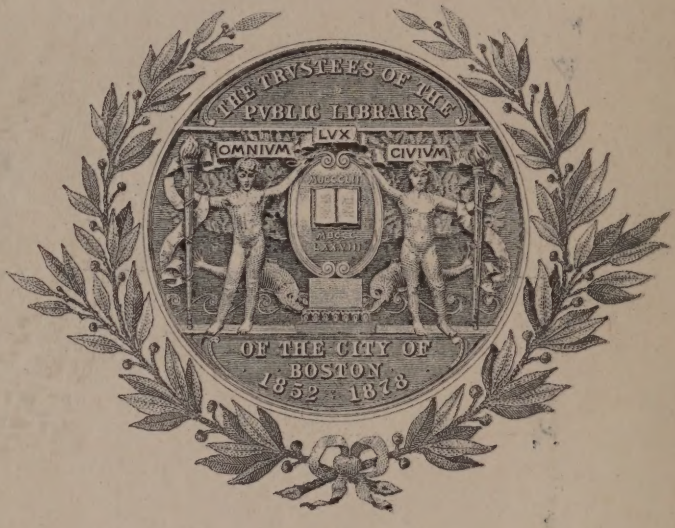
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The Ideal and the Real in a Christian Church.

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A

DISCOURSE

AT THE

END OF TEN YEARS' MINISTRY;

GIVEN IN

KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON,

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24th, 1871.

BY

HENRY W. FOOTE.

PRINTED, NOT PUBLISHED, BY REQUEST OF THE WARDENS AND VESTRY.

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SERMON.

REV., XXI: 10, 11.—"AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHEWED ME THAT GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD; AND HER LIGHT WAS LIKE UNTO A STONE MOST PRECIOUS, EVEN LIKE A JASPER STONE, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL."

THE Bible seems to culminate in these closing chapters of St. John's Revelation.

The angels' song welcomed the dawn of the Christian age; and it is well that the vision of heaven should close the volume which the harmonies of heaven began. John remembered the toils and service and sacrifice of his Master, years before, yet ever present with him,—he stood on a desert island with the wild moaning waves of the salt and bitter sea tossing between him and all that he held dear,—he had been seeing awful things in his vision, things which the Christian world has never really fully understood, they range so high and go so deep; but his vision soared with strong and steady wing out of sight of them to the gate of the new Jerusalem. The eagle has been taken as his type by the Christian Church, because he mounted further than any other into the upper ether, and looked with fuller eye on the Sun of Glory. It seemed to him that he saw already the redeemed and perfect Christian Church,

too high and pure to be already on the earth, descending from Heaven. The glory of God was on it; it shone with a light such as is around His eternal throne. Only the crystal clearness of the most precious stone could furnish him with a figure with which to compare it.

I sometimes wonder how the world seemed to St. John, when the vision unrolled in the Revelation came to an end. Did it seem to him as if he had awaked from a dream to very stern, hard, and ugly realities? Did the glory utterly die away "into the common day"? I believe that it did not. The little rocky island of Patmos still prisoned him close; the pathless sea still shut him in with stronger than iron bars. But he was at liberty upwards. He had been given the franchise of heaven; and that way never could quite close. He who has seen, or known, or been, anything great and true, even in these earthly things about us, is never quite the same. It has passed into his life. The pictures which have brought you into communion with the mind of Raphael, glow at moments in your deepest thought; the Alpine summits still gird your memory round with their circle of snowy heights; your dead friends still enrich your bereaved life. The blessedness of doing an unselfish act, the thrill of joy in having a thought so pure and true that you were willing God and his angels should see it and were not ashamed,—we cannot always live at these heights; but their inspiration comes down into the valleys with us, and the valleys

are fed from the strength of the everlasting hills. How much more must it have been so with this Apostle, to whom had been granted a vision of God and of heaven which has comforted the soul of Christendom ever since. Do you not think that as John paced the lonely beach, watching the blue curve of the horizon not even broken by a distant sail, the hunger of his heart for friends and for his work was appeased by the continuing thought of what he had seen? That far circle of the waters touched the blue sky that bent above. Out of those very heavens, though silent now, he had seen the holy city descending, "like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." The endless wash of the waters on the rocky shore must at times have had for his ear even more of stern and lofty music than it has for us in an Atlantic storm, for it seemed like a faint echo of the thunderings and voices round the throne of God.

A solitary, sea-bound rock, for his prison home,—a life shut away from all that he loved;—that was the fact of John's life. "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." That was the vision of John's spirit.

No contrast that I know of can be found which expresses so strongly as this the relation between the real and the ideal. And although, of course, we can partly account for this by saying that the seer had a

special Divine illumination which we do not have, still, we believe that God comes near to us also,—nearest in the revealing and inspiring way, when we touch our highest levels of spirit. It seems to me, therefore, that John teaches us here the lesson of the advantage of having an ideal, and what kind of an ideal it is which is a real advantage. It is not uncommon to find an impatience of idealists in common life. They are so impracticable in their fancies, they are sometimes so rigid in what they demand from the rest of the world, while they make up the sternness of these requirements by being very easy with themselves. And yet, probably no human being has ever lived who was not at times an idealist, whose plain prose of work-a-day was not glorified by glimpses of light and beauty. The trouble often is, indeed, that the vision is nothing better than day-dreams, sordid and poor at the best. We are sometimes tempted to weave fancies which are the children of discontent and only breed repinings. If a sunbeam shines into a dusty room, its path is revealed by a cloud of floating motes, *and it reveals the motes also.* Many a day-dream only makes us see the dust and specks that fill the common air we breathe, and are stirred more thickly by the very work we do. Visions of that kind are only poor stuff to waste and dribble away the powers of mind and heart on.

But the true ideal is one of God's best gifts to His children. The man, the woman, is to be pitied who

has never been lighted up by it. Nay, I do not believe that there lives one so poor as never to have caught a glimpse of it. It dawns on the youth or the maiden, in the fresh discovery that this life is a great power for good, — in that noble dissatisfaction with self, which longs to be better and truer, — in that hunger to help others, which is God's call to the soul. It comes to us in the times when the spirit is still. In the solitudes of nature, when we are taken up like John, "into a great and high mountain," and see the littleness of little things and the eternal greatness of the true and good, — in the moments when we pause to collect our thoughts, — in the hours when we really listen for God. True, the vision is of very different substance from the fact of which we are a part. But never forget that the best that you have seen in that way is God's voice and call *to you.* Cherish the highest hopes that you have had, the purest ideal that has shined upon you, as a light from heaven. Reverence your own ideal, and that you may reverence it, let it be an ideal which deserves to be reverenced. You have, at some time or other, thought that you could really serve the world by living in it, that it was worth while to make goodness and purity the law of your being, that you could "walk with God" and follow Jesus Christ. Hold fast to that, as to a hand from heaven stretched out to help you. If you do not hold to it, you need expect no other help to save you.

And when we are discouraged, as we well may be, by our inadequacy to square our common life with our best vision, not the less should we remember that the vision may be truer to God's truth than the fact itself. The Christian ideal of character, of duty, of love, has been made real forever in the perfectness of Jesus Christ. That is a sublime reality, which a million common and selfish lives could not obliterate. The Christian ideal of perfect justice and happiness and untrammelled service, is real forever in God Himself; and all the injustices and inequalities of earth cannot outweigh the certainty of heaven. And our own ideal, just so far as it has a spark of the Divine fire which is in Christ and in God, though it vanishes before us all through this life, waits for us there. Do not doubt it. These prayers and aspirations, and resolves, and efforts will meet us at the gate of heaven, and welcome us to the larger opportunity where they can be made real, in that higher life. The things which here we count realities, will have crumbled away, property and reputation, and our place among men, but what we hoped and prayed and struggled for, as in God's sight, will abide.

As I look from my window, in this wintry time, I see a vessel caught in the white sheet of ice that covers the river, and drifted helplessly wherever that may go, like a broken-winged bird,— the very emblem of the poor victim of a stronger fate, trying now and then to make the wind which stirs her sail force her through the icy wall which binds her. But when the winds of Summer blow, and the sweet South has

unlocked the face of the deep, she will spread her free wings before it and bound away in joyful liberty over the sea which is the very type of infinity. And so, methinks, is it with the soul. Because we are nipped here in the frosty currents of the land-bound and shallow stream which we call life, shall we not still welcome the breath from heaven which stirs us even now with better hopes and desires? The time will come when we shall be loosed from these bonds, and can spread the spirit's sail to the airs which we have already learned to welcome, and can feel that our ideal really carries us on, ever on, in the infinite ocean of God's love and service.

Probably every one here at least began in life with a more or less defined ideal of what he or she would make that life. And it would be well for every one to stop sometimes, long enough to look at his life and calculate how far it has wandered out of that orbit which was traced for it at the beginning. There is, however, a special application of this subject which comes to me naturally to-day, and with which the text also specially accords: — *i. e.*: The Ideal and the Real in a Christian Church.

Ten years ago to-day I was ordained your Minister, according to that simple and impressive rite which has been in use here for almost a century. Ten years is a time long enough to be grave over: it is a great piece of life. At such a mile-stone one stops to think very seriously. Perhaps neither minister nor people can do a better thing than to look back over the large

part which they have travelled together of the whole earthly journey.

In what I have to say, I shall speak, once for all, in a more personal way than is my wont. You will bear me witness that that is not the custom of this place. But the occasion seems almost to demand, if it be noticed at all, such personal notice as can be taken with due consideration for your rights as hearers, and with due self-respect,— above all, with respect for the great ends for which we come into this place at all. At least, if the subject do not take you with it, you will not think once in ten years a painfully frequent treatment of it.

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Somewhat like this is the vision of the Church of Christ, which shines on a young man's mind, when he enters the Christian ministry. He knows, as the seer knew, that it is a vision as yet unrealized. But the seer himself probably did not think that eighteen hundred years would pass and still it would be a holy *vision.*

The Christian Church universal, as we believe in it, is of course, the invisible Church. It is not cooped up in any one denomination, little or great; it includes all faithful, truthful, helpful Christian souls, though of many a name and cruelly parted by sectarian lines of

separation. This is the Church which we believe is to inherit the future and make it richer than the past. But for the minister, and for the people too, this invisible Church touches the solid ground at the place where we are. Just as our belief in the universal relation of all men to God, as their Father, does not prevent us from belonging to particular families; so is it with the Church universal and the Church particular. A young man on the threshold of his ministry, finds, therefore, that his ideal Church comes to a focus under the roof where he is called to minister. Cases have been known where the focus generated heat as well as light, and fairly burnt out all the zeal of the young preacher of righteousness, whose indignation at what he failed to find, made him impatient of the good which he really found.

The ideal of a special church which any one will have who thinks about it, whether minister or layman, will differ, in many respects, according as it is placed in the city or the country. Yet, in fundamentals it will be the same, for its value will not be tested by the outward appearance of its people, (else would the Chicago churches, in these days, be hardly off, which yet have probably never before come so near fulfilling the idea of Christ himself,) but by real elements which enter into its innermost quality. Yet a city church in some way peculiarly inspires the imagination. As we see it in the ideal, it of course, presents itself to us, first of all religiously. It is a community of holy souls, — at any rate, of souls that are trying to be holy as

earnestly as the men are trying to support their families and the women to rule their homes well. It believes in Christian worship, as worth while, and attends it accordingly. It believes in prayer, and will fill its public services with the uplifting breath of real praying. It believes in hymns of praise, and helps to sing them. It makes the preacher's power, by giving him open hearts and religious sympathy. It is a brotherhood in Christian love, all bound together in a vital organism, not merely a bundle of human fragments, but gathered close round Christ the Lord. But, second, it does not end its work in its own religious life. The rarest flower cannot, if it would, prevent its fragrance from being diffused through the common air: the strong man cannot, if he would, keep from using his strength. The ideal church will enrich the world with the sweetness and beauty of its Christian life, — it will also use on the world the strength for good which it must have from living near to God. That is, such a church must be a centre of power, sending out its teachers to the poor, pouring forth its charities as wide as the want, hospitable in its helps for strangers, as modern as the needs of a great and active city, meeting its highest demands with a higher, because a more spiritual call. It will be like those venerable trees yonder, which modern vandalism proposes, forsooth, to chop down, rooted deep in history yet full of beautiful life, giving a grateful shade to the present. Such a church as this will be an integral part of the broader Church which is needed more than

ever by our time. For out of these ideal churches is framed the Church universal, and that "holy Jerusalem" which many an earnest spirit in this day has seen "descending out of Heaven from God." And this Church has a work to do in the present, more, perhaps, than ever before. It is true there are those who think that its function is drawing to a close. But I believe, on the contrary, that its Providential opportunity is just opening before it. In an age wild for money and material goods, is there not special need of this majestic presence to testify of spiritual things? In the tendency to lose individual character in the mass, and decide all questions by popular suffrage, is it not important to have the witness of the commonwealth of souls?

The ideal vision of the Christian Church, as seen by one who loves it, is the grandest and fairest presence and power on earth; the helper of human spirits; the representative of God's own charity; the voice of his children crying to him, and the answering voice of the Lord Christ; a living gospel; the earnest of the coming kingdom of God.

We all needed such a vision as that to brace us, ten years ago to-day. Dark indeed was that time of war. I will not call up to your minds a scene which is so present to my own. Again I seem to look on your faces as strangers, yet find them lighted up with kindly welcome. But alas, I must look above the clouds of earth for many and many. Dear and honored friends, the old who

welcomed me with a parental goodness, the children who renewed the image of Christ, brave men who witnessed to the eternal power of self-sacrifice, true men and large-hearted women, some who taught me to go to them with every call for sympathy and help, and not a few who taught me the deepest Christian lessons of faith and love victorious over weakness and pain, names illustrious in this community and far beyond it, and lowly ones almost unknown here but not unknown in heaven. A great and shining chain of precious memories, they seem to me, as I look back, to make real the image of the text. "The glory of God" is on them now, in His eternal years. No tears bedim the thought of them, but its light is "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." In them, at least, the vision is made real, and they are gathered into that higher church which is better than even John could see, "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

In looking back over the good things that this church has done in the ten years, the record would perhaps surprise most of you by its length. Besides the Employment Society, (which has furnished the model for similar organizations in several other churches,) there is, perhaps, not a single unsectarian charity in Boston which has not been served with time and thought by members of this parish. Organizations for helping the poor, Sewing Schools, the Children's Mission, and especially the Pitts Street Chapel, as we still love to call it, have been quickened by our life. And even

if this sometimes draws away from our concentrated energy, we cannot complain. Only, we ought to remember that a church which can feed so many good things, is really alive and is perhaps thus proving its life in the most unselfish and generous way. In this connection it ought to be said that the closer interest which we have taken for some years in the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, by forming a branch of it within our church, and by more liberal contribution to it, has done great good. You have contributed to many calls besides the regular charities of the church. To name some out of many: the Sanitary Commission, the relief of poor whites at Louisville, the Freedmen's Aid Society, the Massachusetts Infant Asylum, a scholarship in the Hampton Institute, the Unitarian Association, and lately, the sufferers at the West, received your contributions. If I should begin to count the ways in which this church has given to good objects, outside the church doors and as individuals, there would be no end. I wish to bear this public record, because there is probably no Christian church in this community more misjudged in this matter. Yet I must frankly say, that a part of our reputation is our own fault. There is no other church which I know of which tries so anxiously to hide its own light under a bushel. If it is good to shew that we are not confined to our church in interest, it is also good to work in it and through it. We should be better off, every way, "body, soul and spirit," if our workers and our givers

would try more frequently to make their giving and work tell more on the best life and union of the church to which they belong.

You do not care to hear, nor I to enumerate, how many sermons have been preached here, — how many visits have been made, — or any of those statistics which are but the outside view of ten years ministerial work. Enough to say, that I find myself coming more with every year into the habit of being in this pulpit Sunday after Sunday; and my own preference would never let me go away from it. But the exigencies of ministerial courtesy to my brethren are a duty which must be respected too; and they require occasional exchanges, more perhaps than a congregation is aware.

We have at different times held special services here. The carols at Christmas and Easter have now become an established fact. The course of Monday lectures this winter has interested many of you. For several years we have held a communion service on the evening before Good Friday, and a service for the close of the year, which have been peculiarly impressive in the quiet and dimly lighted church. In these things other churches are now following our example; and it is much to be hoped that our discontinuance of the last named service will be but temporary, while it is to be regretted that there has been any discontinuance.

Our great lack, both in the occasional services which have sometimes been held in Lent and at other times,

has been that of a convenient chapel, situated nearer the centre of our parish district; and I will confess that it has been a great disappointment to me, that the way has never seemed to be clearly opened, as yet, for obtaining this great help.

Of course, the record is a very mingled web of experiences. I should be ashamed to have learned no lessons in the ten years. Every year only deepens my conviction that to be the minister of any church, and particularly of a city church, is a great opportunity, just in the proportion that one is helped by cordial coöperation and good will.

And now you will ask how far the real corresponds with the ideal. Has the ten years' work found the perfect fruition of the untried hope at the beginning; or is it as with Jacob, at the end of his seven years' service for Rachel, only Leah after all?

I answer, if I did not believe that at least it pointed toward the ideal, I should not be in a Christian pulpit at all. There is plenty of honest work to be done in the world; and the man who does not believe that his own work, honestly done, is worth doing, had better find something else as soon as possible.

But if I thought the ideal attained, or attainable in this life, it would prove the lowness of the ideal. I do believe in the Christian ministry, as a service which is large enough to satisfy any man's heart, and noble enough to lift him, who tries to do it, above petty discontents and worries. True, it is no holiday task in these days; perhaps it is better for that very reason.

In old times, the minister was a pope in his parish; he was above criticism or suggestion, and was sorely exposed to that spiritual pride which springs from unquestioned authority. Certainly, these are not his besetting dangers now. I think that the time tends to a small criticism which is not well for either party, and often sets up sensational and impossible standards for the ministry. But carping at the tendencies of the time is not the best way to mend them; neither do we find that the Saviour promises, as one of his rewards, that 'all men shall speak well of one.' The great discouragement of the work in these days is, that so many persons prejudge the case against the Christian preacher, and conclude, from his very calling, that he must either lack sincerity or common-sense; so that he is civilly enough refused a hearing when he speaks of what he believes to be the truth of God. But I know no other remedy for this state of mind than patience and that respect for others' opinions which is born of a right respect for one's own. One thing is certain; a man can neither go into the Christian ministry in these days, nor stay in it, without sifting his own faith to the bottom; and if he find a ground of rational belief in a personal God and Father, and a redeeming Saviour, in the Christian records and spirit, and in the immortal life, — things which are either less than nothing, being a lie, or else are the greatest of truths and powers; — if, I say, he has faith in these, what can he do but say with the Apostle, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

Something must be said of a practical difficulty in the minister's calling. His duty, in a city like Boston, involves three things, if not four, which are almost incompatible. To begin at the outside, — he ought to take his part in the charitable systems of the town, and to know their working. That is where the Christian Church, whose servant he is, touches one great part of its Master's work. Yet, to do this thoroughly, demands, both an expenditure of time which would leave neither time nor strength for his other duties, and also a kind of practical executive faculty which is not usually given to him. Moreover, his whole public service should have its springs fed from solitary study. But this needs method and system ; it requires the putting aside of many things good in themselves ; it needs the cordial coöperation of parish and minister. He may be their "servant for Jesus' sake" as truly when he is slowly hiving secluded studies, too few as at best they must be, as when spending himself in good works with them or for them.

And, then, he must know his people, not merely in outside ways, but in the confidential relation of a friend. It is my privilege to see you in your times of deepest experience. It is a much more difficult matter than it was even twenty years ago, to discharge the pastoral work in this city, with satisfaction to one's self. For at least one-third of the year, you are most of you scattered in nearly sixty different towns and villages. In the eight remaining months, besides

the Sundays, there are but two hundred and fifteen days. Into these must be put all the preparation for the pulpit and the bible-classes, all the rest that other men take on the Sunday, all the calls to sickness and sorrow, (which I count my first duty,) and those calls to funeral service, which you will not wonder to be told, drain the very life away from a minister's sympathies, and leave him for hours unable to turn to any other duty. All this, besides the quiet studies without which the mind runs dry, and the visiting of the parish. I find, therefore, that most of my professional brethren do not try to see their people in their homes more than once a year, and some of them do not do it more than once in two years, on an average. The rule which I laid down for myself ten years ago, is more exacting; but with every effort I am well aware that it is both physically and mentally impossible to do all that I would in this direction. I pray you, then, once for all, to believe that I count every one of you, young and old, as having the claim on me, not of an official relation, but of a personal friend. If it seems long since I have been in your home, come to me in mine, where you will be always welcome. If you are sick or in trouble, be sure to let me know it; since in the confusion and separations of city life, I may not otherwise find it out till your need of me is past. Send for me or come for me when you want me. And be assured that I thank you from my heart for the friendship you have so generously given.

The other department of the minister's work, that of preaching, there is no need to say much about now. It is enough to say, that I consider it the first of all in importance. Any man ought to rejoice in the privilege of speaking every week to an assembly of living souls, on the great, serious truths of the Christian message. He ought to suspect that something was wrong in himself, if he did not find it, at times, a heavy burden. Everything of any worth is wrought out at the cost of something of life itself; and the best preachers that have ever lived, would tell you that this is quite as true of sermons as it is of other things. No one is probably so dissatisfied with a man's preaching as the preacher himself, for he sees the ideal which he tries to express, and knows how far the real falls short of it. The great principles by which I have tried to be guided, were laid down in wise and weighty words by the honored father in the churches, who charged me here ten years ago. He bade me, in words which are engraved on my memory, while respecting the differences of political and practical opinion which I should meet, "Not to be silent on public affairs in dark and terrible trials, like that through which our country is now passing; . . . to plead for united counsels; for a brave resistance to wrong; for heroic self-sacrifice." He bade me bring into this pulpit, "Not what you are seeking, but what you have found. . . . Let it be the one care, I had almost said the one thought, of your preaching, to lead your hearers to look on

Christianity, not as a question to be disputed about, but as a law to be obeyed, a spirit with which we are to be filled." He warned me: "There will be dark days, unexpected crosses to be borne, hope deferred which makes the heart sick. At such times, never lean, I solemnly charge you, on an arm of flesh, nor try to reconcile your conscience to a lower standard of duty, or lower aims." And to his "brethren of this Society" he said: "There are those who say that the pastoral relation has lost its significance; but for proof to the contrary, I would point to the history of this church. . . . There are advantages in having a young minister, and there are advantages in having an old minister; you will not expect both in the same person. . . . You will remember that the connection which has here been formed is a religious connection. . . . If you would strengthen his hands and encourage his heart, let him see that his labor is not in vain in the Lord."

One word should be added, about a practical matter of the administration of worship. The second service is a great problem in every Sunday's course. Those of you who know that the church is open in the afternoon for this purpose, will not be surprised to be told that that is the great strain, both on spirits and strength. Since I first stood here, five, out of the nine Unitarian churches which I found in Boston, besides King's Chapel, have either given it up entirely, or changed it to an occasional evening service. And this, for the reason that is so trying to see vast deserts

of empty space in the congregation. I am sometimes asked why I do not urge you to follow this example. The reason is, that there are still enough who enjoy the second service to have a right to have it. I feel, too, that this is the best opening which we have for trying to reach the community around us: on whom I believe that every Christian Church should try to bring its strength to bear. I think, however, that the second service should be more distinctly adapted to this end, by more flexibility in its methods, and in its hours, by more frequent use of occasions such as we shall have this afternoon. With those who have concluded to prefer private and domestic, or charitable methods in the afternoon, after looking carefully at the question of the best *religious* use of those hours of Sunday, I have no controversy, but only say, with the Apostle, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." But I will frankly say that those of you who believe in having such a service can help me more than you yourselves are aware, in making it profitable, by bringing others and by coming yourselves.

The steady westward movement of our population, necessarily, in these days, brings a trial on the constitution of our dear old church, such as it never before had to undergo. We will not disguise from ourselves, that the distance of many of our people from this house creates serious problems in our church life. And yet a real interest in the church will keep it alive, and help it to grow in spite of this difficulty.

The distance, after all, does not keep you from places of business or amusement: the means of locomotion practically shorten it very much. We could not move the old church, if we would, without cutting many of its roots. Let me plead with you to care for it, to work for it, the more because it will not run on of itself.

King's Chapel has stood in this city for nearly a century, as embodying a great religious idea,— the idea of unsectarian fellowship in the broadest Christian worship, and of loyalty to the simple truth.* The value of that idea is as great as it ever was. It is worth retaining,— worth making sacrifices for. By our religious convictions we are, most of us, in sympathy with the Liberal Christian Church, though the congregation here contains "Orthodox Congregationalists," Episcopalians, and others, at the same time with all the shades of Unitarian belief. While we do not conceal our various convictions, we yet believe that we can come together on a broader and higher ground of union. We believe, too, in congregational independence, as well as liturgical worship. Yet we have of course the danger to be guarded against, of

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* "The Liturgy, contained in this volume, is such as no Christian, it is supposed, can take offence at, or find his conscience wounded in repeating. The Trinitarian, the Unitarian, the Calvinist, the Arminian, will read nothing in it which can give him any reasonable umbrage. . . . . Our earnest desire is to live in brotherly love and peace with all men, and especially with those who call themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ."—*Rev. Dr. Freeman's Preface to the First Edition of the Liturgy, in* 1785.

mere isolation; and I have felt it my duty perhaps more than some have approved, to urge you to give sympathy and help to the good works of the religious body, and coöperation to the churches, with which we are most nearly allied in belief.

This church took its ground at a time when it cost something so to do. Several Protestant denominations have since advanced far in the same direction; but they have not fully and honestly assumed the position. The broad Church in which we shall all be fused will come, but not in our time. Its preachers preach in many an "Orthodox" pulpit, and find eager hearers, but the sects to which they belong only draw their lines the tighter. And if we wish to know intelligently what their doctrines really are, we must go to the articles of belief which they write as their constitution, and which it is a poor compliment to their honesty, to believe that they hold as a whole, but deny in every part. The temptation often in religious things is, to play fast and loose with truth. One of the great dangers of the American people is that so many will thus form the habit of pretending to join in forms of worship which yet they will privately tell you they do not believe in. The great charm of this pulpit to me is, that here the duty of simple loyalty to truth is a fully accepted fact, that we come together on the basis of spiritual worship, where we can meet, and not on the basis of any creed but the authority of Jesus Christ. If you believe that that is the true and honest principle for a Christian church to stand on

before the world and before God, I ask you, not as a personal matter to the minister of the church, who is merely a temporary incident in it, but for the sake of your real convictions, to help, by your presence and interest and work, to give that idea honor and value.

Friends, whether the church to which we belong shall seek to realize the vision of the Apostle, having a "light like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal," depends on ourselves. We can make that ideal real, and if we do not, no other can do it for us. "And he shewed me . . . . the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." While we have been here through these years, it is a solemn thought that that vision has been coming nearer to us, or going further from us. We are not what we were. That church has been building up as a fact, or has been pulling down, even as a vision, in your souls and in mine. If we have gained in faith and love and charity, and only so, can we feel that it stands for this world and the world to come.